

The plumage in the two sexes of this species differs in a manner unusual in the family to which it belongs. The description given in all systematic works is applicable, as I ascertained by dissection, only to the old females; namely, back and breast black, with the feathers of the neck having a white central mark following the shaft,—tectrices, with a broad white band at extremity; thighs and part of the belly rufous-red; beak “ash gray,” with cere and tarsi “Dutch orange.”

MALE of smaller size than female: dark brown; with tail, pointed feathers of shoulders and base of primaries, pale rusty brown. On the breast, that part of each feather which is nearly white in the female, is pale brown: bill black, cere white, tarsi gray. As may be inferred from this description, the female is a much more beautiful bird than the male, and all the tints, both of the dark and pale colours, are much more strongly pronounced. From this circumstance, it was long before I would believe that the sexes were as here described. But the Spaniards, who are employed in hunting wild cattle, and who (like the aboriginal inhabitants of every country) are excellent practical observers, constantly assured me that the small birds with gray legs were the males of the larger ones with legs and cere of an orange colour, and thighs with rufous plumage.

The YOUNG MALE can only be distinguished from the adult bird by its beak not being so black, or cere so white; and likewise in a trifling difference of plumage, such as in the markings of the pointed feathers about the head and neck, being more like those of the female than of the old cock. One specimen, which I obtained at the Falkland Islands, I suppose is a one-year-old female; but its organs of generation were smooth: in size larger than the male; the tail dark brown, with the tip of each feather pale colour, instead of being almost black with a white band; under tail-coverts dark brown, instead of rufous; thighs only partly rufous, and chiefly on the inner sides; feathers on breast and shoulder like those of male, with part near shaft brown; those on back of head with white, like those of adult females. Beak, lower mandible gray, upper black and gray (in the old female the whole is pale gray); the edge of cere and the soles of the feet orange, instead of the whole of the cere, tarsi, and toes being thus coloured. The circumstance of the young birds of, at least, one year and a half old, as well as of the adult males, being brown coloured, will, I believe, alone account for the singular fewness of the individuals with rufous thighs, a fact which at first much surprised me.

The *Milvago leucurus* is exceedingly numerous at the Falkland Islands, and, as an old sealer who had long frequented these seas remarked to me, this Archipelago appears to be their metropolis. I was informed, by the same authority, that they are found on the Diego Ramirez Rocks, the Il Defonso islands, and on some others, but never on the mainland of Tierra del Fuego. This statement I can corroborate to a certain degree, since I never saw one in the southern part of

Tierra del Fuego, near Cape Horn, which was twice visited during our voyage. They are not found on Georgia, or on the other antarctic islands. In many respects these hawks very closely resemble in their habits the *P. Brasiliensis*. They live on the flesh of dead animals, and on marine productions. On the Ramirez Rocks, which support no vegetation, and therefore no land-animals, their entire sustenance must depend upon the sea. At the Falkland Islands they were extraordinarily tame and fearless; and constantly haunted the neighbourhood of the houses to pick up all kinds of offal. If a hunting party in the country killed a beast, these birds immediately congregated from all quarters of the horizon; and standing on the ground in a circle, they patiently awaited for their feast to commence. After eating, their uncovered craws are largely protruded, giving to them a disgusting appearance. I mention this particularly, because M. D'Orbigny says that the *P. Brasiliensis* is the only bird of this family in which the craw is much developed. They readily attack wounded birds; one of the officers of the Beagle told me he saw a cormorant in this state fly to the shore, where several of these hawks immediately seized upon it, and hastened its death by their repeated blows. I have been told that several have been seen to wait together at the mouth of a rabbit hole, and seize on the animal as it comes out. This is acting on a principle of union, which is sufficiently remarkable in birds of prey; but which is in strict conformity with the fact stated by Azara, namely, that several Carranchas unite together in pursuit of large birds, even such as herons.

The Beagle was at the Falkland Islands only during the early autumn (March), but the officers of the Adventure, who were there in the winter, mentioned many extraordinary instances of the boldness and rapacity of these birds. The sportsmen had difficulty in preventing the wounded geese from being seized before their eyes; and often, when having cautiously looked round, they thought they had succeeded in hiding a fine bird in some crevice of the rocks, on their return, they found, when intending to pick up their game, nothing but feathers. One of these hawks pounced on a dog which was lying asleep close by a party, who were out shooting; and they repeatedly flew on board the vessel lying in the harbour, so that it was necessary to keep a good look-out to prevent the hide used about the ropes, being torn from the rigging, and the meat or game from the stern. They are very mischievous and inquisitive; and they will pick up almost anything from the ground: a large black glazed hat was carried nearly a mile, as was a pair of heavy balls, used in catching wild cattle. Mr. Osborne experienced, during the survey, a severe loss, in a small Kater's-compass, in a red morocco case, which was never recovered. These birds are, moreover quarrelsome, and extremely passionate; it was curious to behold them when, impatient, tearing up the grass with their bills from rage. They are not truly